

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03656 231643Z

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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O 231515Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9750

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3656

NODIS

PASS TO SECRETARY IN LONDON

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJ: MEETING WITH FRANGIE - SAYS HE WILL SIGN.

1. AMBASSADOR BROWN SPOKE WITH FRANGIE FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF APRIL 23RD IN JOUNIEH BEFORE RETURNING TO BEIRUT AIRPORT BY HELICOPTER AND TAKING PLANE TO LONDON. DURING LAST HALF HOUR PARTY WAS JOINED BY CHAMOUN. GEMAYEL UNFORTUNATELY COULD NOT MAKE IT.

2. AMBASSADOR REVIEWED WITH FRANGIE ALL THE ELEMENTS CONTAINED IN HIS INSTRUCTIONS SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT WITHOUT DELAY. HE PLACED PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON OUR INTEREST IN THE WELL BEING OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. AT FIRST FRANGIE WAS ADAMANT, CLAIMING THAT THE SECURITY CONDITIONS ON WHICH THE AMENDMENT WAS IN PART BASED DID NOT PREVAIL. AMBASSADOR THEN TACKLED THIS "VICIOUS CIRCLE" ARGUMENT AND FINALLY GOT FRANGIE TO AGREE TO SIGN THE AMENDMENT. HOWEVER, AS APRIL 23RD WAS A HOLIDAY, FRANGIE SAID HE WOULD DELAY HIS SIGNATURE UNTIL THE FOLLOWING DAY. (NOT CLEAR WHETHER FRANGIE WAS REFERRING TO GREEK ORTHODOX GOOD FRIDAY OR TO THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WORK AFTER 1100 HOURS ON FRIDAY IN DEFERENCE TO THE MOSLEMS.)

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3. FRANGIE HAS SAID BEFORE HE WOULD SIGN BUT HAS BACKED

DOWN. HE IS MEETING WITH MARONITES THIS AFTERNOON.
THEY MAY PERSUADE HIM NOT TO SIGN, BUT OUR READING IS THAT
THE MAJORITY ARE IN FAVOR OF SIGNATURE.

4. IF THE AMBASSADOR WON ON THE SIGNATURE, IT WAS NOT A
COMPLETE VICTORY. FRANGIE WENT ON TO SAY THAT, EVEN IF
A NEW PRESIDENT WAS ELECTED, HE WOULD NOT RESIGN IF
ADEQUATE SECURITY CONDITIONS DID NOT EXIST. BUT THIS IS
A BRIDGE WE CAN CROSS WHEN WE GET TO IT.

5. CHAMOUN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONVERSATION WAS TO START
OFF ON THE NECESSITY OF ESTABLISHING A SEPARATE STATE.
AFTER A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TALKING TO, THE AMBASSADOR
FINALLY GOT CHAMOUN MOVED TO WHAT APPEARS TO BE HIS STANDARD
FALL-BACK POSITION, NAMELY THAT HE WOULD HOLD OFF
A FEW YEARS TO GIVE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT A CHANCE.
WARING

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